

Message Text

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SUBJ: EFFECTS OF PESO FLOAT ON NIV APPLICATIONS

1. EMBASSY CONDUCTED SURVEY OF ALL CONSULAR POSTS IN MEXICO TO DETERMINE ANY CHANGE IN VOLUME OF NIV APPLICATIONS ATTRIBUTABLE TO PESO FLOAT. POSTS REPORTED VOLUME OF APPLICATIONS FOR PERIOD OF SEPTEMBER 1 - 17, 1976 AS COMPARED TO THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR. ALTHOUGH CHANGE IN VOLUME IN APPLICATIONS MAY BE PARTIALLY INFLUENCED BY FACTORS OTHER THAN PESO FLOAT AND ALTHOUGH SEPTEMBER IS TRADITIONALLY A LIGHT MONTH FOR NIV APPLICATIONS, WE FEEL THAT THE CHANGE IN DEMAND IS SIGNIFICANT. OVERALL, NIV APPLICATIONS DECREASED BY 30 PERCENT. THIS DECLINE TOOK PLACE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF STEADILY RISING DEMAND FOR NIVS DURING THE FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF 1976, MAKING THE CHANGE EVEN MORE DRAMATIC. APPLICATIONS FIGURES BY POST FOLLOW:

VISA APPLICATIONS

POST	SEPT 1-17, 1975	SEPT 1-17, 1976	CHANGE
MEXICO CITY	9,735	6,650	- 32 O/O
GUADALAJARA	2,370	1,846	- 22 O/O
MONTERREY	2,175	1,462	- 33 O/O

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NUEVO LAREDO	780	234	- 69 O/O
HERMOSILLO	484	622	PLUS 29 O/O
MERIDA	385	305	- 21 O/O
CIUDAD JUAREZ	250	157	- 30 O/O
MATAMOROS	223	186	- 30 O/O
TOTAL	16,402	11,462	- 30 O/O

TIJUANA AND MAZATLAN REPORTED NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN WORKLOAD FROM LAST YEAR.

2. FIGURES ON DECREASE IN NIV DEMAND SUPPORT EARLIER EMBASSY ASSUMPTIONS ON BONAFIDES OF NIV APPLICANTS. FACED WITH SITUATION IN WHICH IT IS NO LONGER BENEFICIAL TO SHOP IN THE US AND IN WHICH TRAVEL TO US IS NOW PROHIBITIVE FOR LOWER MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES ON REASONABLY STRICT BUDGETS, INTEREST IN TRAVELLING TO US DROPPED. LOCAL TRAVEL AGENCIES CONFIRM THIS CONCLUSION -- THEIR BUSINESS HAS DECLINED SIGNIFICANTLY AND MANY AGENCIES ARE FIRING PERSONNEL. WE FIND APPLICANTS' WILLINGNESS TO, IN EFFECT, MAKE THEIR OWN DETERMINATION THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT FUNDS TO TRAVEL TO US EXTREMELY ENCOURAGING. DECREASE IN NIV APPLICATIONS MAY ALSO BE DUE IN PART TO UNCERTAINTY REGARDING ECONOMIC SITUATION IN MEXICO ALTHOUGH THIS UNCERTAINTY IS PRIMARILY REFLECTED IN INCREASED INQUIRIES REGARDING MAKING APPLICATION FOR IMMIGRANT VISAS.

3. ALTHOUGH PESO FLOAT HAS CAUSED DRAMATIC DECREASES IN NIV APPLICATIONS, DROP IN WORKLOAD MAY NOT CONTINUE. THE REAL TEST OF THE EFFECT OF THE PESO DEVALUATION WILL COME AT THE TIME OF THE CRISTMAS RUSH, WHEN WE WOULD NORMALLY EXPECT LARGE NUMBERS OF VISA APPLICANTS AND BY WHICH TIME ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN MEXICO SHOULD HAVE STABILIZED SOMEWHAT. RECENT ACTIONS BY GOM RAISING BOTH WAGES AND PRICES FOLLOWING PESO FLOAT MAY

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INCREASE THE DEMAND FOR VISAS BY MAKING TRIPS TO US MORE AFFORDABLE THAN THEY HAVE BEEN DURING THE PAST FOUR WEEKS. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW TRENDS IN NIV WORKLOAD CLOSELY AND WILL SEND FURTHER ANALYSES TO DEPARTMENT AS THE SITUATION STABILIZES.

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